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FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0034  
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 3850  
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY 4101  
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 9164  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 2084  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 3517  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 9089  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L KATHMANDU 000245

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DEPT FOR SA/INS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/25/2016  
TAGS: [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [NP](#)  
SUBJECT: HEAVY FIGHTING IN WESTERN NEPAL; ELECTION  
CANDIDATES DOUBTFUL

REF: KATHMANDU 107

Classified By: Ambassador James F. Moriarty, reasons 1.4 (b/d)

MAOISTS ATTACK BORDER CITY OF NEPALGUNJ  
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11. (C) Heavy fighting occurred when Maoist rebels attacked Nepalese security forces the evening of January 24 in the western border town of Nepalgunj. Reports indicated that fighting started around 8:15 pm local time and continued until approximately 10:00 pm. According to the press, there were hundreds of Maoist attackers, while the Royal Nepalese Army (RNA) asserted the attacks were not as "massive" as the media portrayed. Police and RNA sources confirmed that there were two waves of attacks. Dhawal Shamsheer Rana, a former mayor of Nepalgunj, told us he heard "several bomb explosions and thousands of rounds of bullets." Bhavani Rana, who operates a hotel in Nepalgunj, stated she heard gunfire at the nearby Ward Police Office, three or four loud explosions, and sporadic gunfire until 2:00 am. According to the Senior Superintendent of Police, Maoists attacked the District Police Office, Ward Police Office, District Jail and District Administrative Office. In addition, the Informal Sector Service Center (INSEC), a human rights NGO, reported that the regional office of the Nepal Rastra Bank and the RNA's Fultreja barracks were attacked. INSEC also noted that the RNA and armed police force (APF) had reinforced their positions at the District and Ward Police Offices before the attacks due to recent Maoist threats to attack Nepalgunj. The RNA reported that, as of the morning of January 25, the situation in Nepalgunj was under control.

FEW CASUALTIES REPORTED  
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12. (U) Casualty reports varied slightly; police sources indicated that two police officers, one RNA soldier and two Maoists were killed in the fighting. INSEC reports added two additional Maoists and one civilian to the casualty list. However, a journalist source in Nepalgunj reported that at least 12 security service personnel died and confirmed INSEC's information that at least four Maoists were killed in the fighting.

CANDIDATES FOR ELECTIONS NOT LIKELY TO RUN

13. (C) Dhawal and Bhavani Rana both opined that there was no possibility of candidates running in the February 8 municipal elections due to Maoist threats. The deadline to file for candidacy is January 26. Home Minister Kamal Thapa was scheduled to visit Nepalgunj today to encourage candidates to run in the polls. A source from the west told us that the Chief District Officers of Rupandehi and Kapilvastu Districts (in western Nepal) had grave concerns about conducting the polls.

COMMENT

14. (C) The Maoist attacks in Nepalgunj are in line with their stated objectives of continuing armed struggle to overthrow the monarchy and disrupting the municipal elections (reftel).

Post expects the Maoists to step up violent attacks in the lead up to the February 8 municipal elections. Worryingly, despite warnings of a possible Maoist attack, the insurgents succeeded in entering the center of Nepalgunj, well-armed and in large numbers.

MORIARTY